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The most significant homeland security projects I have been involved in.

The City of Los Angeles is home to nearly 4 million people covering 480 square miles. Thus making it the largest city by area in the nation and second largest by population. With that distinction, it elevates itself on the target list for radicals wishing to disrupt the American value system and force their ideals on the world by terror. Los Angeles is also home to the largest port in the United States, coupled with its iconic landmarks and transportation hubs, the threat to its boundaries are real and require vigilant partnerships with government agencies, communities, and intelligence capabilities to stand up a proactive security stance that is calculated and measured by its people. The Los Angeles Police Department is one such partner and its last line of defense for response, prevention and crime reduction is Metropolitan Division. In January of this year, I was tasked by the Chief of Police to take command of this Division and double its size from 250 to 500.

The end state of this expansion would be in October of 2015 and would have a structure that would provide special operations capable forces 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It will have 9 Platoon Lieutenants, 40 Sergeants and 450 Officers. As the Commanding Officer I was charged with the recruitment, selection, testing, training and providing the logistical support to outfit this elite force managing 4 separate budgets. This reserve force will be at the forefront during emergencies and natural disasters. As such, Metropolitan Division has developed contingency plans and simulation training to respond to potential counterinsurgency or terrorist situations. This capability is spread over 9 platoons that are SWAT, K-9, Mounted, Underwater Dive Unit, Executive Protection, Tactical Support Platoons and Administrative. Specific duties are not limited to events that are beyond the scope and capability of a patrol division. Specifically: controlled and specific crime suppression details, hostage rescue, crisis negotiation, area searches for outstanding suspects using K-9's, surveillance operations, stake outs, witness and dignitary protection, crowd management and control events, barricaded suspects and advanced training for the Department.

This expansion effort to meet the homeland security challenges of Los Angeles, required a strong structure of leadership willing to look beyond temporary hurdles and re-structure a command and ensure its support framework was reflective of 2015 Los Angeles and the world influence that is thrust upon us. This hand selected leadership team had to look at systems to monitor every aspect of the command. We had to develop an outreach program, a sustainable training program, selection systems to gauge and temper the largest expansion in LAPD history, smart deployment to strategically place 160 officers 7 days a week, intelligence systems for gathering and feedback to Department leadership and ensure this system was able to adapt as quickly as the emerging threat pattern changes on the world scheme.

As I carry out the command duties of this special operations division, our success is only as strong as our partnerships with other commands, agencies, and our communities. We are a significant force capable of employing tactical resources to address any contingency which has been a template for other cities around the world. But without strong relationships, partnerships and intelligence sharing, this significant and costly venture of ensuring the safety of the second largest city in the nation would fall prey to complacency, insularity, and irrelevance. It is these human relationships that will carry us through the homeland security challenges that are omnipresent in our city today.